



EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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What the world needs in 2011

When the Berlin Wall came down 22 years ago last month, the world rejoiced. The vast concrete and barbed wire scar running for miles across the German countryside, so vividly symbolic of the great divide between rival ideologies, was no more. The old Soviet Union quickly crumbled and millions of people breathed free for the first time.

Liberty had triumphed at last and a *Pax Americana* would soon engulf the world, we were told. Many historians even referred to the coming era as "the end of history." They were wrong.

Even though communism, the great enemy of our way of life,

the Darfur region of Sudan, massive destruction of life is occurring with apparent government sanction. North Koreans have resorted to eating grass to avoid starvation — that is, the North Koreans who have somehow avoided that country's Stalinist gulag system.

Many other areas of the world are a powder keg, waiting for the fuse to be lit. Anyone who remotely doubts the presence of the Devil and his evil schemes in the workings of this world must have his/her head in the sand. He is real, and he roams among us seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8).

What the world needs in 2011 is what it has always needed: Jesus, Jesus, the Son of God and Savior of the world. It just seems that the world needs Jesus more and more with every passing year.

If the world knew Jesus in 2011 like we know Jesus, the Tutsis and Hutus would join together in brotherhood. Chechens and Russians would put aside their political differences for a far greater cause. Warring factions in Sudan would seek the Heavenly Father, not more artillery. North Koreans would have hope, and all the ethnic groups in the Balkans would gather in friendship to raise one voice in praise to the Light of the world.

The only way all of that will ever happen is if those people know Christ. The only way those people will ever know Christ is through the witness of Christians. It's that simple (Matthew 28:18-20). If not us, then who?

The historians in 1989 were right about one thing — history will end. They're just off on the date by a little bit. If 2011 is the year, may our returning Lord say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant." (Matthew 25:21)

"DEAR LORD, I HAVEN'T
DONE A VERY GOOD JOB LATELY
OF TELLING YOU HOW IMPRESSED
I AM WITH YOUR ARTISTRY."



nessed genocide on a scale not seen for more than a half-century. Tribal conflicts in the African nations of Rwanda and Burundi resulted in the slaughter of millions of innocent men, women, and children. The Balkans erupted in flames over centuries-old grievances, and mass graves are still being uncovered.

An especially cruel war raged in the Russian state of Chechnya, with schoolchildren and other civilians paying a high price. In

I'm afraid they're becoming really selfish," my friend said. "My two girls fight over everything, from what movie they're going to watch, to who gets the [Nintendo] Wii first. I don't know what to do about it."

Children's squabbles are part of parenting, for sure. Sometimes they're a sign of tired bodies, surging hormones, or natural orneriness — but other times, they're a flashing beacon that something more is at work: selfishness.

Our culture offers so much, materially, that it's easy for our children (and for us, too) to take for granted how much we really have. We stop noticing all that we do have in our endless quest for what we don't have.

We forget to consider what our lives would be like without the gifts — people, talents, possessions, opportunities — that already have been given to us.

The antidote? Gratitude. Researchers have found that people who cultivate the habit of gratitude reap all sorts of benefits, from better health, to greater happiness, to stronger relationships.

For adolescents, gratitude is a vital piece not only for character formation, but also for day-to-day perspective. A recent study by researchers at

GUEST OPINION:

Stop selfishness in its tracks

By Rebecca Hagelin
Arlington, Va.

several leading universities reports that children who show more gratitude experience less envy and depression.

Conversely, children who rank higher on materialism experience less happiness and struggle more with grades and contentment.

Back to the squabbling sisters. What will help them change course? How can parents cultivate gratitude instead of envy and discontent?

First, set limits. When selfishness is a problem, parents need to limit their children's constant access to entertainment, trendy possessions, and fleeting "wants" — at least for a time. Materialism grows where material possessions abound and when there are few limits on when and how often they will be enjoyed.

Second, start a daily exercise in which whining children (or parents) write down things for which they are thankful. Researchers have found that the simple act of keeping a "gratitude journal" increases happiness and wellbeing.

When we have to stop and think about what we are grateful for, and write it down daily, we reduce the tendency to take our things, talents, and friendships for granted. We appreciate the good in our lives more deeply.

Third, encourage humility.

Robert Emmons, one of the premier researchers on happiness and gratitude, emphasizes it's not enough to be grateful, in the abstract, for the good things in our lives. We need to be grateful to someone. We need to look outside ourselves and acknowledge our dependency on others — particularly God — for the source of goodness in our lives.

Make it a daily practice to thank God for His goodness and blessings, and to thank those around us for their kindness, generosity and friendship.

Let's start with a humble acknowledgement of the good in our lives and a vow that we will always remember that all good flows from the hands of the One who created us — and that He is worthy of our thanks and praise.

Hagelin, the mother of three, is a pro-family advocate, speaker, and author. Her latest book is *30 Ways in 30 Days to Save Your Family*. Sign up for her e-newsletter at www.howtosavemyfamily.com. Her commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

Death toll rises from Christmas terrorism

JOS, Nigeria (BP) — Tensions mounted in two Nigerian cities in late December as sectarian bloodshed left 80 dead, including a Baptist pastor and two church members. Dozens of others have been seriously injured.

Violence erupted on Christmas Eve when militants of the outlawed Islamic sect Boko Haram attacked two churches in the northern Nigerian city of Maiduguri. Jihadists belonging to another Muslim sect set off a series of bombs in the city of Jos.

Bulus Marwa, pastor of Victory Baptist Church in Maiduguri, was dragged from his residence, shot, and killed after two choir members rehearsing for a late-night carol service were hacked to death inside the church.

Two passersby also were killed and the church building was set ablaze. At a nearby Church of Christ, a security guard was killed and 25 people injured by bomb blasts when Boko Haram members stormed the church in two vehicles and detonated bombs.

In Jos, bombs exploded simultaneously on Christmas Eve in two Christian neighborhoods, hitting shopping centers, restaurants, and a Catholic church. The death toll there stands at 80, with 120 hospitalized. A previously unknown Islamic group claimed responsibility.

Since the Christmas Day

Day because of the violence, many did not meet, Olonade reported. Those who threw bombs in the city and killed innocent people didn't expect us to gather in our churches, but we did," he said.

Police said 109 people died, mostly women and children.

The country is officially divided between the Christian south and Muslim north. Jos lies in the center of the split. Since 2001, killings of both Muslims and Christians have plagued Jos, leaving more than 2,000 people dead.

"I don't mean to make Nigeria sound like a war zone because it is not," one missionary said. "Rather, I ask for prayers in the midst of difficult circumstances. It breaks my heart to know that there are people out there who do not know our Savior. Some of them don't want to know Him and even hate Him."

"Even so, there are so many who would like to hear and are curious about the Gospel. I pray that many who see these radical actions will begin to understand that there has to be a better way."

Christians in both cities have taken refuge to avoid further attacks while soldiers and police keep watch at churches and other Christian locations in the area. Southern Baptist missionaries living in Jos heard explosions and gunfire two miles from their home, where they had gathered with colleagues and friends for Christmas celebrations.

Later they saw houses on fire and a large military and police presence.

Nigeria has a history of sectarian violence. In January and

February of 2010, hundreds died in incidents throughout the country. In March, violence broke out in Jos when members of local Muslim and Christian communities fought each other in retaliation for previous killings.

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COVERING MISSISSIPPI IN PRAYER

BIBLIOCIPHER

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004

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NATHTPVHT MT SHT

GOHETW MENA AED GJ

GSKNELD ECNV

WTSNA; NASN YEFT SL

XAHLEN MSL HSELTW

OK PHVD NAT WTSW GJ

NAT RYVHJ VP NAT

PSNATH; TQTC LV MT

SYLV LAVOYW MSYF EC

CTMCTLL VP YEPT.

HVDSCI LEU: PVOH

Clue: P = F

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Six: Twenty-seven.

Covering Mississippi in Prayer will be an experience of thousands of people every morning before 8 o'clock gathering before God's throne praying for special needs in their lives, their area of responsibility and influence, and the thoughts that God places in our hearts as we pray for His Kingdom work around the world. In January, February, and March, I will have the privilege of being at 90 of the Prayer Rallies that are going to be held at county seats all across our state. I am confident that those moments together in each one of those places will not just be a gathering and not just be a publicity stunt but will call attention to the urgent and powerful attention of the people of God to be praying. It is not just praying for Mississippi, though that will take place. It is about Mississippians praying.

The journey across the state to these prayer gatherings began Monday, January 3, and will continue through Tuesday, March 29. While we will be praying for ourselves to find a relationship with God that is both cleansing and encouraging, we will also be praying for the leaders of towns and counties. We will be praying that there will be many precious souls that will come to know Jesus as Savior and Lord. These are not just one-time momentary events. There will be other prayer emphases in our churches and in our associations that can be life changing, church renewing, and make an impact on our communities.

One aspect of the gathering of thousands each morning is to pray before 8 o'clock each day. Why pray before 8 o'clock each morning? Clearly, there is

Directions
Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

• Prayer Points

nothing magical about 8 o'clock, but there is something wonderful about beginning your day with God. While some people may head off to work at 4 o'clock, others are trying to get the kids to school before seven or 8 o'clock, and the importance is not to rush off into the hurriedness and the worriedness of the day without talking to the One who knows every turn and every way of the entire day. It can change the way you begin the day and it will bring a clear awareness that everything that is happening throughout the day whether it is with the kids or the career, whether it is dealing with some major issue that you have been focused on, or surprise that rocks your world. Listen carefully and read attentively this verse, Mark 1:35, which describes Jesus. "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." Just think about that. Before Jesus was immersed into all of the opportunities and challenges the day might hold, before He was engaged in conversations with others, before He would teach, preach, or be faced with soul-searching questions, and

before He would field those trick questions that seemed to have no answers, He spent time with the Father in prayer. If He felt a great need to face the day covered with prayer, you and I can benefit many times over from doing likewise. You do not know what the day ahead holds for you, but He does. You may not have all of the answers and certainly may not have all of the strength that you need for things that you face but He does, and so each day as you Cover Mississippi in Prayer begin it early with the God who cares about you and everything that you face. Spend time with the loving Father who will walk with you every step and every second through the day. With that in mind, you can live in confidence with a peaceful heart and with the promise of God

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.

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REV GRAHAM ON HIS RELIGION & THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

ON THE RECORD

GRAHAM SPEAKS — Billy Graham gave his first interview in several years Dec. 20 when he spoke to Fox News' Greta Van Susteren about his relationship with the Bush family, his hope for the future, and the meaning of Christmas. (BP photo)

absolutely transformed Christmas for me," he said.

"All the shopping and the gifts and all the things we celebrated [at] Christmas, it's a spiritual time. It's a time that strengthens my faith and gives me courage for the future. And I don't expect to live that much longer, but I do remember that every Christmas strengthened my faith as I came along."

If Graham had the opportunity to live his life over again, he said there are things he would do differently.

"I would study more. I would pray more, travel less, take less speaking engagements. I took too many of them in too many places around the world," he said.

With Christmas approaching, Graham said the holiday means "a great deal" to him, and his wife "always made a big thing of Christmas for the children."

"We all looked forward to it. We would get up on Christmas morning and have our prayers, and then we would sit under the tree and open our presents, usually on Christmas morning, sometimes on Christmas Eve," Graham said, "but when I looked into the crib or the manger and saw that little baby who was going to rise to become the greatest teacher that ever lived, to die on the cross for my sins, to know that I'll be forgiven because of what He was doing, it

"I mean, one way, from a kind of biblical analogy, he was — started to help me plant seeds, and the ground was — the ground was pretty hard." Bush said, "but after meeting Billy Graham, the ground became more fertile for the seed, is one way to put it."

"No, he helped change my life. He truly did and I was a questioning person. I was drinking a lot and religion was — you know, I used to — I put in the book, I would listen but never hear, and Billy Graham helped me understand the redemptive power of a risen Lord."

More than 1,000 people lined up outside the Billy Graham Library Monday to meet the Bushes, and Graham joined them briefly to receive the first signed copies of their books that day.

Franklin Graham gave the former president and first lady a private tour of the library and later said his father's mind is as strong as it has been in the past few years.

"His mind is sharper today than it was five years ago," Franklin Graham said. "I don't know what it is. He is getting better. He is getting stronger."

JUST FOR THE RECORD

1. Ackerman Church, Ackerman, will host The Chuck Wagon Gang on Feb. 19 at 7 p.m. The Joyful Noise Quartet will open for them at 6:30 p.m.
2. Hopewell Church, Crystal Springs, will host The Singing Echoes of Cleveland, Tenn., at 10:30 a.m. on January 9. Contact: Shirley Bufkin (601) 892-6093.
3. The School of Church Music and Worship at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., will host a reunion of students and faculty from 1949 to the present, on July 11-12, 2011, on the Louisville campus. For more information, contact Phillip Landgrave at 3612 Foxglove Lane, Louisville, Ky. 40241. E-mail: gloria.landgrave@bellsouth.net. Telephone: (502) 425-5943.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. McAdams Church, Attala Association



2. Tomnolen Church, Webster Association



3. Grace United Church, Decatur



4. First Church, Potts Camp



1. **McAdams Church, Attala Association**, ordained two new deacons. Pictured are (front left) James Young, pastor; Jan Deason; Raymond "Ed" Granger; and Steve Jordan, Attala Association missions director.

2. **Tomnolen Church, Webster Association**, held Senior Deacon Recognition Day on Nov. 14. Pictured are (from left) Marion and Jeanie McCain, Davis and Jimmie Morgan, and Joe and Betty Bailey.

3. **Grace United Church, Decatur**, held its Christmas cantata, *Glory in the Highest - A new Hallelujah*, directed by music minister Daniel McNeil, on December 19. Pictured are participants.

4. **First Church, Potts Camp**, Girls in Action visited Trinity Mission Health and Rehabilitation in Holly Springs on Dec. 8. The girls handed out Christmas cards and candy canes to the residents. Pictured are participants.

5. **Tremont Church, Itawamba Association**, recently held a pastor installation service. Pictured are transitional pastor Ken Anderson (left) and wife Judy (second from left), and new pastor Matthew Russell (right) and wife Marley (second from right).

6. **Shiloh Church, Big Creek**, recently recorded a new record for the children's program, which focuses on Bible study, missions, and music. Pictured are participants. Johnny Hearn is pastor.

7. **First Church, Jackson**, recently held the Thankful Christmas program featuring the Reflections Choir. Morris Currie is pictured performing the Eddie Arnold tune, *Christmas Can't Be Far Away*, with the Reflections Choir in the background. Led by Eva Hart, the annual event is held especially for home bound individuals in central Mississippi.

8. **Topeka Church, Jayess**, and Tilton United Methodist Church, Jayess, joined together for their Christmas cantata, directed by Justin Smith. Pictured are participants.



5. Tremont Church, Itawamba Association



6. Shiloh Church, Big Creek



7. First Church, Jackson



8. Topeka Church, Jayess

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS, JANUARY 9, 2011

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

A Lifestyle of Humility

Luke 14:1-11; John 13:1-17; Philippians 2:1-11

By Becky Brown

We always lose when we make the mistake of comparing ourselves with other human beings. Either we conclude that they are better than we are and implode in despair or we conclude that we are better than they are and explode with pride. Those who walk a lifestyle of humility are not concerned about losing or winning. They are intent on looking for ways of helping others succeed.

The Apostle Paul made sure that his loved ones in Philippi knew how to sing in unison from the same sheet of music. In chapter two of the love letter to his Philippian friends, Paul brings them (and us) to a moment of personal identification. We reveal our actual humility quotient when we use the life of Jesus as our

example of how to live and love and treat others. When we compare ourselves with the beauty and the glory of the humility of Jesus, we are immediately aware of our cavernous shortfall. Those who keep their eyes on the cross will never compare themselves to anyone except Jesus. In other words, humble people are "cross-eyed." Be assured, their "Not-I-But Others" condition has nothing to do with ophthalmology.

Paul was sharing with his readers the time-tested, eternally-proven four-part recipe for making the glue called humility. He basically told them to stick together, to stick up for each other, to stick to the point and the purpose and to stick around. In Acts 1:8, Jesus told His apostles to share their witness to the uttermost parts of

their world. Little did they realize that their work would begin in the "guttermost" parts of Jerusalem. Selfless people are willing to begin at the place called "Others-most." Can you even imagine what would happen if our churches were actually filled with "others-most" folks??? Jesus died for this!!!

In the third gospel in the New Testament, Doctor Luke provided us with this quote from the lips of Jesus: "For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled and he who humbles himself shall be exalted." These blood

red words found in Luke 14: 11 should be acknowledged as Jesus' instructions on how to develop "HIM-mility." His audience of puffed-up Pharisees never seemed to get His message. The lowest they ever stooped in response to the ministry of Jesus was to stand at the foot of His bloody cross.

The gospel of John describes the events surrounding Jesus' last supper with them before His crucifixion. John 13 says that while the twelve disciples were enjoying their meal, Jesus slipped away from the table. He rose from supper. He laid aside His outer garments. He picked up a towel and prepared Himself for the task. He poured water into the basin

and began to wash their feet with the water and dry them with the towel. He was not asking that they return the favor and wash His feet. He wanted to show them how they could show humility to others by their willingness to serve.

Two things have always touched me about this story. First, Jesus sent the man with the pitcher of water in advance. He planned to wash feet. He knew He would need water. Humility must be intentional. Second, Jesus washed twenty-four feet that evening. A few hours later, two of those feet would betray Him. The other twenty-two feet forsook Him and fled. Humility doesn't come easy. I've always thought about the fact that the last sight Judas had on earth was to look downward at his own clean feet as he hung himself. God's grace alone lifts us out of our pride and despair and helps us to be willing to kneel at that basin and reach for that towel.

Brown is staff evangelist at First Church, Richland.

Hazaël king over Aram, Jehu as king over Israel, and Elisha as his replacement. These men would each play a role in destroying the infrastructure of Baalism (1 Kings 19:15-17). God responded to Elijah's deep personal doubt by reassigning him. Engagement in a worthy cause often cures our bouts with doubt. Yahweh told Elijah one last thing. He reminded Elijah He had 7,000 people in Israel, who had neither bowed their knees to Baal or kissed his image (1 Kings 19:18). Whenever we reach the point of thinking we are the only ones still faithful to the Lord, our self pity becomes a hindrance to ministry. Often the Lord will anoint someone else to take our place. On our second mountain, Mt. Horeb, the mountain of God. On this second mountain, Elijah faced perhaps his greatest enemy, self-doubt. There and then, Yahweh, the victor of Mt. Carmel, spoke to Elijah one-on-one in "a still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12b; KJV). The Lord asked Elijah, "What are you doing here?" Elijah proclaimed his faithfulness to the Lord in spite of the fact that everyone else had abandoned Him (1 Kings 19:14). The Lord commissioned Elijah to anoint

odds, 850 to one. However, the "one" was backed by the One True God, making the one greater than the 850. Elijah put the matter in sharp relief by asking the people, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him" (1 Kings 18:21; NIV). The word "waver" derives from the Hebrew verb "to limp." Whenever we try to serve the Lord and other things, we develop a spiritual limp, hobbling between our faith in God and our desire for earthly possessions. The matter was quite simple. The people were challenged to follow whichever God/god proved to be true. The command to "follow" literally means "to walk behind" or "to walk after."

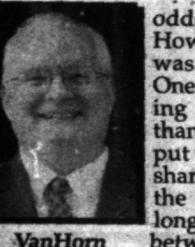
When Jezebel heard about Elijah having the 850 prophets killed, she promised to kill him. Elijah fled in fear (1 Kings 19:1-3a). The victory on Mt. Carmel evaporated in the heat of imminent doom. Elijah ran all the way to our second mountain, Mt. Horeb, the mountain of God. On this second mountain, Elijah faced perhaps his greatest enemy, self-doubt. There and then, Yahweh, the victor of Mt. Carmel, spoke to Elijah one-on-one in "a still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12b; KJV). The Lord asked Elijah, "What are you doing here?" Elijah proclaimed his faithfulness to the Lord in spite of the fact that everyone else had abandoned Him (1 Kings 19:14). The Lord commissioned Elijah to anoint

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

A Hill On Which To Stand

1 Kings 18:20-21, 37-39; 19:1-3a, 13b-18, 16-18

By Dr. W. Wayne VanHorn



VanHorn

instead of obeying the Lord and going to Jerusalem. Ahab maintained the sinful policies of appointing non-Levites to the priesthood and of celebrating feasts on dates contrary to the Lord's command. If all these things were not bad enough, Ahab encouraged the worship of the false god Baal and his female consort, Asherah, the gods of his wife, Jezebel.

God called Elijah to confront Ahab and his people as they slid further into idolatry. The major confrontation occurred on our first mountain, Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 8:20). Elijah the prophet represented the Lord. Baal was represented by 450 prophets; Asherah was represented by 400 additional prophets. Keep in mind Baal and Asherah were false gods. Elijah had to take a bold stand in the face of overwhelming

odds, 850 to one. However, the "one" was backed by the One True God, making the one greater than the 850. Elijah put the matter in sharp relief by asking the people, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him" (1 Kings 18:21; NIV). The word "waver" derives from the Hebrew verb "to limp." Whenever we try to serve the Lord and other things, we develop a spiritual limp, hobbling between our faith in God and our desire for earthly possessions. The matter was quite simple. The people were challenged to follow whichever God/god proved to be true. The command to "follow" literally means "to walk behind" or "to walk after."

When push came to shove, only Yahweh showed up! Baal and Asherah were "no-shows." Yahweh's fire fell and consumed the altar, wood, dust, and water. Elijah had poured

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mccb.org.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs



The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lit.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

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TORNADO DAMAGE - 01/01/11

Photos by William H. Perkins Jr.

